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ABSTRACT

This document is a questionnaire designed for work-based learning providers. It is a diagnostic benchmarking tool developed to give organizations a snapshot of their current state. Following a brief introduction, there are instructions for filling in the questionnaire, which includes both open-ended response and scoring according to a pre-determined scale. Participants are asked to consider both motivating influences or drivers and results. The following categories are motivating influences or drivers: (1) management style; (2) service culture; (3) staff management; (4) understanding the customer; (5) service design and development; (6) delivery system and processes; (7) instructional technology and electronic communication; (8) working with suppliers; (9) managing for improvement; (10) service recovery; flexibility/responsiveness; (11) cost and value; and (12) service standards. Results categories are: (1) internal service quality; (2) service effectiveness; (3) service quality; (4) customer satisfaction and value; (5) customer loyalty; and (6) business performance. A glossary of terms used in the questionnaire is included. (AJ)

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learning PROBE

BENCHMARKING FOR EXCELLENCE

QUESTIONNAIRE

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THE VOICE OF BUSINESS

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WELCOME TO THE LEARNING PROBE INITIATIVE

Learning PROBE is a confidential survey carried out by LSDA in association with CBI, London Business School and Northumbria University. Severn Trent Plc kindly sponsored the development and launch of Service PROBE† of which Learning PROBE is a variant.

Learning PROBE has been adapted for the learning and skills sector by Jane Owen at LSDA and David Yarrow and Alex Appleby at Northumbria University.

With a couple of exceptions, the questions seek to assess today's position: a snapshot of your current state. They cover both the practices you employ and the performance you achieve across a broad range of issues. By addressing these key processes, you will be able to establish a comparative position against both national and world-class standards of service provision.

The notes that accompany each question in part 1 have been included to help you prepare for answering the questionnaire. They should help you to gather all appropriate information and to ask the right questions of your organisation.

The information you give us will be kept strictly confidential and only used in suitably sized comparison groups. Individual learning provider data will not be used other than on behalf of, and at the request of, that learning provider.

Thank you for joining the Learning PROBE initiative. By doing so you have started on the road to bench-marking your organisation, an essential activity for any aspiring world-class organisation.

† *Service PROBE is based on the results of the International Service Study – a detailed study of over 500 service companies in the UK, US and Germany. It was developed by Professor Chris Voss, London Business School; Professor Richard Chase, Marshall School of Business, University of Southern California; and Professor Aleda Roth, Kenan-Flagar School of Business, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. We acknowledge the input of Professor Bob Johnston of Warwick Business School, in the original UK study.*

THE LEARNING PROBE QUESTIONNAIRE

HOW TO FILL IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The information from Learning PROBE is confidential. You will not be assessed by any other organisation on the results you give.

We seek to assess the position of your organisation today, not where it will be when current plans and projects deliver the results you expect. Benchmarking will only ever be of value if assessments are true reflections of the practices and performance of the organisation as it is now.

The Learning PROBE questionnaire starts on the following pages. Each right-hand page asks you about a particular area of your organisation, for example service quality. Within each of these areas there are a number of questions about aspects of that particular area: for example, one of the aspects within quality is reliability. Within each of these questions are statements; you have to choose the statement most appropriate to your organisation or organisation site/department. Each statement gives you a score to be written in the box provided.

On the facing left-hand page there are notes giving a more detailed explanation of each question. These notes are numbered in the same sequence as the questions. There are a few lines underneath each note for you to write your own responses or thoughts.

HOW TO SCORE

You choose the statement most appropriate to your organisation or organisation site and this gives you a score – the number in the band above. Sometimes you may feel that your organisation is between two statements. In this case you choose the number in the band between the two statements. In the example below, the organisation questioned felt that statement b was most appropriate to them so they scored 3. If they felt they were between statement a and b, they would have scored 2. You must only give whole number scores.

There is a glossary of terms on page 58 of this questionaire.

Example

1
Area
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
Statement a		Statement b		Statement c

3

Statement b is most appropriate to our company so we score 3.

If you see differences across the organisation, where some areas are more advanced than others, it is best to assess an average position. For example, a pilot implementation does not warrant the maximum score of 5.

Remember to keep in mind who the organisation's customers are when completing the questionnaire – learners, partners, local business and stakeholders.

MANAGEMENT STYLE

1
Role of leadership in developing service culture

What is the role of the organisation's leadership (senior managers/governors/principal) in communicating and reinforcing clear values and high performance orientation?
Does this include developing a service culture throughout the organisation?
How visible is senior management in promoting this?
To what degree is a service culture promoted, not just at the point of contact between learner and teacher or with other customers, but throughout the whole organisation?

2
Management style

What is the organisation's structure? How many layers does it have?
Where are decisions – day-to-day and strategic – made?
Remember that delegation and working in teams are not the same as empowerment.
Carefully consider the role of the manager and the skills of individual team members.
What examples do you have of genuine empowerment?

3
Shared vision, mission and goals

Many learning providers have stated their vision, mission and operational goals.
How were they developed and who was involved in the process?
In order to be effective, they need to be communicated and understood at all levels in the organisation. Is there documentation supporting this communication and the methods employed?
How have these organisation-wide statements been translated into practical operational goals for departments and individuals?

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MANAGEMENT STYLE

1
Role of leadership in developing service culture
Please mark score in right-hand box

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

Little attention paid by top management

Supported by top management, responsibility delegated down

Top management visibly promotes and actively participates

2
Management style
Please mark score in right-hand box

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

Managers autocratic with little cross-functional communication

Flat organisation: teamwork encouraged

Managers as leaders. Extensive staff empowerment and participation

3
Shared vision, mission and goals
Please mark score in right-hand box

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

No shared plan or vision statement

Management share vision. Written mission statement

Common vision. Total staff involvement in goal setting

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4
Customer orientation

How customer orientated is the whole organisation?
A customer-oriented organisation identifies its customers and their requirements and expectations. Has this been done and incorporated into the organisation's plans as a central focus of the organisation, or is it internally focused?
Have customer expectations and satisfaction been measured?
How are their needs disseminated within the organisation?
Has the concept of internal customer/supplier relationship been adopted?
Do teaching methods and course provision constantly change to meet the needs of learners and other customers?

5
Staff attitude

Providing outstanding service requires all staff, both teaching and support, to be fully committed to delivering customer service, throughout the whole organisation. How do you measure that there is a positive and committed attitude to service among all staff?
Are staff trained in customer care?

6
Quality values

Has the organisation defined its quality values, such as customer focus, in its mission and goals? Are quality values embedded in the organisation, and are they part of the way both management and staff work?

7
Openness within the organisation

Does the staff believe that the organisation allows and encourages an open atmosphere, so that they can debate issues and areas for improvement without feeling threatened?
Is it always safe to voice views openly or do staff keep problems hidden?
To score more than 3 there should be examples of management encouraging openness.

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4
Customer orientation
Please mark score in right-hand box

Customer service expectations and satisfaction not known

Customer requirements identified, including those of internal customers

Customers are the central focus of business planning. Expectations and satisfaction measured

5
Staff attitude
Please mark score in right-hand box

Little respect for the service they deliver

Strive to deliver the service but feel the organisation could be better

Understand and are fully committed to customer service

6
Quality values
Please mark score in right-hand box

Quality values not part of the core values of the organisation's staff

Quality values adhered to by individual management and staff members

Quality values explicitly addressed in company mission statement and actively promoted

7
Openness within the organisation
Please mark score in right-hand box

Dialogue is actively discouraged

Openness is tolerated

Staff believe that openness is supported and encouraged

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8
Relationship building

How do you build, enhance and maintain positive relationships with customers, (learners, staff and other customers), that in turn lead to loyalty and cooperation?
Customer partnerships are more than just routine meetings.
Who is involved in communication with external customers?
Do all customers see you working together for mutual benefit and value?

STAFF MANAGEMENT

9
Recognition

Recognition of exceptional individual performance can reinforce and promote outstanding service. How do you get external and internal feedback on individual service performance against expectations?
Are there 360° (including upwards) appraisals?
How is this translated into recognition of good service?
Does everyone consider feedback to be their responsibility or is it considered a line manager's responsibility?

10
Management evaluation and recognition

How is management performance assessed?
Are managers assessed on more than financial performance measures and statutory performance indicators?
Does their personal performance evaluation include service delivery, quality and customer satisfaction?
To score beyond a 3, this must be more than an annual performance review.

11
Skills and job training and education

What training plans exist?
To score 2 or more requires a documented plan and allocated budgets.
The score will depend upon the type, amount and distribution of training across the organisation. How are knowledge and skill reinforced on the job?
How are training plans linked to organisation's needs?
Are you seeking or have you achieved Investors in People accreditation?
Does training average 10 days or more (5%) per member of staff (eg is teaching staff development linked to course delivery needs – teaching qualifications and work experience)?

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8
Relationship building
Please mark score in right-hand box

Customers do not identify with the organisation, many examples of misunderstandings and lack of communication

Good relationships with many customers, but little formal attention to development of relationships

Active relationship development and marketing. All customers seen as partners

STAFF MANAGEMENT

9
Recognition
Please mark score in right-hand box

No feedback or recognition of service performance at staff level

Recognition of exceptional individual performance by management

Recognition is everyone's responsibility and is based on exceeding both internal and external expectations

10
Management evaluation and recognition
Please mark score in right-hand box

No links between non-statutory performance and managers' evaluation and recognition

Some managers evaluated and recognised on non-statutory performance such as customer satisfaction and quality

Evaluation and recognition of most managers linked to service delivery quality and customer satisfaction

11
Skills and job training and education
Please mark score in right-hand box

No formal training programme. *Ad-hoc* training

Some skills development and training for all staff

Established plans with average of at least 5% of employee's time devoted to training

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12
Education and training for quality

What are the organisation's plans for education and training in quality (for example quality tools and techniques)?
What percentage of the organisation do they cover?
Do new recruits receive training in quality?
Training in quality should enhance staff ability to solve problems and improve service delivery. Examples of quality training are tools and techniques such as flowcharting, Pareto analysis and cause and effect diagrams.

13
Learning organisations

How do you go about promoting learning at individual, group and organisational level in your organisation?
How is this resourced and organised (eg circulars, government papers, external agency information and training)?
To score more than 3 there should be examples of proactive knowledge sharing across the organisation.

14
Staff involvement

How do staff contribute to the decision-making process?
Prepare a list of existing systems that have been designed to involve staff: quality programmes, suggestion schemes, quality circles, staff committees, staff councils, etc.
What measures exist to assist the success of these schemes?
In what ways, if any, do staff exhibit empowerment?

15
Day-to-day teamwork

Teams can be work teams or drawn from across departments and management levels to deal with specific issues. These are more than just a group of people working together in a department or as a management team.
Do you have effective team working with shared objectives?
Do these enable all staff (teaching and non-teaching) to exercise discretion and decision-making, leading to flexibility, innovation and learning?
How do you try to use teamwork on a day-to-day basis?
How much are formal, informal, temporary or longer-term teams used?

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12
Education and training for quality
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
Limited training for quality		Some quality training, focus on improvement of 'quality' knowledge		Comprehensive quality training plan. Training in quality values, tools and techniques

13
Learning organisations
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
There is no formal facilitation of group or individual learning at the organisational level. Increase in knowledge levels is not actively pursued		Learning is promoted, but individuals are primarily responsible for their own knowledge. Passive information sharing systems and processes		Management promotes and provides resources for learning. Active information sharing systems. External information is consistently updated and distributed

14
Staff involvement
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
Blocked by attitudes of both management and staff		Have tried improvement teams and suggestion schemes with some limited success		Staff highly involved. Are able to make real contributions to business improvement

15
Day-to-day teamwork
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 5% of staff involved in teams		25–35% of staff involved in teams		More than 50% working effectively in teams with shared objectives in day-to-day work

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16
Listening to staff

Feedback from staff is vital in learning provider organisations.
How does the organisation go about getting staff's views and feedback?
How does the organisation ensure that this is acted on?
Do you use staff surveys, focus groups or other methods?
How do you use the results?

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17
Attention to staff loyalty to the organisation

High staff turnover can confound efforts to build a strong customer-oriented organisation. How is turnover monitored?
Do you know why good people leave?
What action plans are there to create the work climate that will lead to staff satisfaction and help retain outstanding staff and minimise inappropriate turnover?
If turnover is low what would happen if another similar organisation opened nearby?
Are members of staff staying because there are no other opportunities?
How do you know?

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18
Support for staff

Teaching and other staff can only provide outstanding service if they have the necessary recourses and support such as technology, information and effective service process. How do you ensure that this is always the case?
Do you solicit feedback from staff on the quality of resource available?
Are resources always sufficient to deliver the service to internal and external customers?

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19
Measurement of staff satisfaction

How is staff satisfaction measured?
Are staff surveys used on a regular basis to assess morale within the organisation?
What indicators are used to assess staff satisfaction and morale?
Do you know the links between staff satisfaction, absenteeism, workforce performance and customer satisfaction? What are they?

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16
Listening to staff
Please mark score in right-hand box

Staff expected to get on with their jobs

Some mechanisms to obtain views of and ideas from members of staff

Wide range of formal and informal mechanisms for gaining staff input and acting on that input (eg service design, etc)

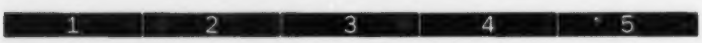
17
Attention to staff loyalty to the organisation
Please mark score in right-hand box

Generally accepted that the nature of the work environment will lead to staff turnover or rely on lack of other opportunity for low turnover

Staff turnover monitored, with a moderate effort to improve retention

Ensuring loyalty of staff seen as a major concern, with explicit policies to maximise retention

18
Support for staff
Please mark score in right-hand box

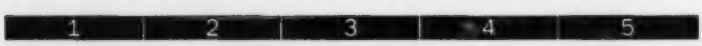


Inadequate support (eg technology and service design) for staff providing customer service

Reasonable support for staff, but shortages in resources do not always allow staff to satisfy customers

Staff feel that they receive adequate support and resources to do their job and to satisfy customers fully

19
Measurement of staff satisfaction
Please mark score in right-hand box



No measurement of staff satisfaction

Some measurement of staff satisfaction

Systematic staff satisfaction measures collected and related to customer satisfaction data

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INTERNAL SERVICE QUALITY

20
Staff loyalty relative to sector

Do people come and leave frequently or do your staff display loyalty and commitment to the organisation?
What measures do you have of staff turnover level relative to the sector?
You cannot score more than 3 if there is no comparable measurement.

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21
Staff satisfaction

What is the overall level of staff morale?
What data is this based on?
What is the current and likely future trend?
You cannot score more than 2 if there is no measurement year on year.

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INTERNAL SERVICE QUALITY

20
Staff loyalty relative to sector
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
High turnover, worse than sector average		Sector average turnover of staff. Average commitment and loyalty		Staff turnover at low end of sector. Very high levels of loyalty and commitment

21
Staff satisfaction
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
Moderate or serious internal morale problems		Stable atmosphere. Good staff satisfaction, with upward trend		Optimism and confidence. Highest levels of staff satisfaction

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UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMER

22
Listening to the customer

How does your organisation capture the voice of the customer?
Are informal means such as staff feedback and customer complaints used?
What formal mechanisms are there such as market research, learner surveys and focus groups to identify current and future expectations?
How is this data used to improve existing services and design new services?
To score more than 3 you must effectively use a range of customer feedback mechanisms to improve service delivery.

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23
Understanding markets

How does the organisation select the customer groups or market segments (such as learners, groups or employers) you choose to serve now and in the future?
Do you establish different customers' needs and behaviour?
How are these characteristics identified?
How systematic is this process?
Does it allow you to fully understand the needs of different groups, the determinants of their behaviour and drivers of customer satisfaction?

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24
Value

By understanding what creates value for customers and providing for it you can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.
What aspects of your service do your customers most value?
How do you go about identifying what creates value for your customers, and what are its drivers?
If customers had a choice, do you know whether they would still come to you?

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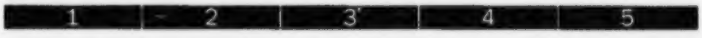
UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMER

22
Listening to the customer
Please mark score in right-hand box

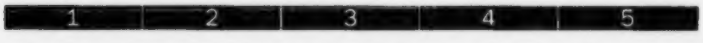


1	3	5
Service design and standards driven by internal efforts: only customer interactions are those associated with the provision of the service	Done mainly though informal means and complaints. Translation of these into service standards	A range of both formal and informal mechanisms to identify customer expectations. Fed into both service design and standards

23
Understanding markets
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	3	5
Market information tends to be based on anecdotal evidence and intuition	Conducts some market research. Partially developed systems to understand structure and needs of target markets	Has formal process for identifying market segments, customer groups, and what drives customer satisfaction

24
Value
Please mark score in right-hand box



1	3	5
No understanding of what creates value for customers	Organisation trying to identify and measure what value is in the eyes of its customers	What creates value for customers generally well understood

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25
Sector positioning

How is your service positioned relative to other learning providers?
What information do you collect and use to support this?
Is the service you provide sufficiently different to establish your place in sector?
Is this differentiation based on customer information?

SERVICE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

26
Customer input for new and existing services and products

What customer inputs are used in the process of developing new services and enhancing existing ones – for example, focus groups with demanding or leading customers?
How is this information gathered and used?
How do you ensure that the voice of your customers is heard in all aspects of the design and development of your services, eg course content and timing, teaching and learning methods?

27
Strategic role of innovation (the development of new services and products)

Innovation can occur in the way the service is delivered and the design of innovative responses to customer need. Does innovation happen because of the enthusiasm of individual members of staff or does senior management actively and systematically encourage it?
How much do you set out to allocate resources and promote innovative activities?

28
Organisational structure for service and course development

Who is involved in the design of new services and courses?
How are different functions and outside interests included in the design process?
To what extent is there true teamwork, rather than just consultation and committee approvals?
How are external experts used?
How do you identify learner and other customer needs when developing new courses, for example delivery methods and timing?
If services are developed formally is this done by a specialist group or department or are cross-functional teams used?

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25
Sector positioning
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
No understanding of how organisation's services are positioned relative to other service providers		Some understanding of how services are positioned relative to other service providers		Customer information used to help position and differentiate services offered

SERVICE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

26
Customer input for new and existing services and products
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
No direct customer input into the development of new services and courses		Range of inputs, internal and external, used in new and existing service and product development		Systematic inclusion of customer requirements in the development of services and courses

27
Strategic role of innovation (the development of new services and products)
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
Innovation is discouraged or, at best, neglected		Innovation is desirable but not emphasised. Generating new ideas seems more incidental than a core competency		Innovation is a key component of organisation strategy. Senior management promotes and allocates resources to innovative activities throughout the organisation

28
Organisational structure for service and course development
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
Design and development of services and courses, and improvement of existing services is *ad hoc*		Internal department or group of specialists/ consultants to develop services and courses		Cross-functional staff teams typically develop services and courses (with or without internal/ external support)

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29 Innovative environment

Is the environment in the organisation one where people know that they can put forward innovative ideas and expect support?
Can people try new ideas without being held back by fear of failure?
How are innovations encouraged?

30 New service design and development process

Continuously enhancing existing services and developing appropriate new services are key processes. What are the key process for incorporating changing customer and market requirements, changing teaching methods, and technology into service designs?
To what degree is there a formal and reproducible process?
Is this process also subject to improvement?

DELIVERY SYSTEM AND PROCESSES

31 Support functions (back office)

Support functions are the parts of the organisation that do not interface with the customer. How integrated is the support function with service delivery?
How do they contribute to total service delivery?
How are they being used to create market opportunities and deliver superior service?

32 Management of key processes

Process management is at the centre of achieving excellence.
How do you go about identifying the key processes in your organisation?
Have they been mapped across department boundaries?
Have these been redesigned where appropriate?
How do you set responsibility for key processes (process owners) and how are the processes managed to maintain performance?
Have you moved from a functional to a process mindset?
To score 3 or more you should have mapped the process.

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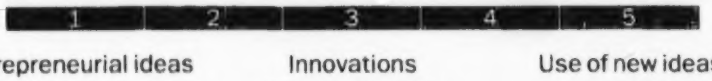
29
Innovative environment
Please mark score in right-hand box



Entrepreneurial ideas are discouraged. New ideas considered only if return is substantial

Innovations are encouraged, but originator generally takes responsibility for risk of failure. Collaboration across departments is not facilitated

Use of new ideas is supported and funded. Risks are minimised via 'fail-safe' mechanisms. Successes are publicly rewarded

30
New service design and development process
Please mark score in right-hand box

No identifiable process for new or existing service development. *Ad-hoc* basis

Services developed and improved regularly but no set process

Formal and reproducible processes for developing new and enhancing existing services

DELIVERY SYSTEM AND PROCESSES

31
Support functions (back office)
Please mark score in right-hand box

Provide transaction, administrative or service support only, but often a source of complaints

Contribute to service, play an important role in the total service and are given attention, but still play a separate role from the frontline teaching service

Proactive and develop superior processes and create new market opportunities for the organisation

32
Management of key processes
Please mark score in right-hand box

No attention to business processes across departments

Key processes defined and mapped. Initial steps taken toward redesigning and improving these processes

Key processes managed and redesigned where needed. Process owners in place. Process performance measured

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33
Customer relations

Most organisations invest in developing relationships with their customers. These relationships can provide the ability to offer customer-specific solutions, with service often customised to individual needs.
How do you build relationships with your customers?
How do you use customer relations to improve service delivery?
Do your customers see you as being easy do work with?

34
Current use of IT

IT has the potential both to make processes more effective and to create totally new ways of working. How good are your information systems?
How well are they supporting the key processes?
How far have you exploited IT's ability to generate entirely new ways of working for the organisation as a whole?
Has IT changed the way you work or has it just moved the old system from paper to PC?

35
Managing 'moments of truth'

Each point of contact with customers is a 'moment of truth', with the opportunity to succeed or fail in the eyes of the customer. A moment of truth can be a telephone contact, or someone asking a cleaner for directions. How systematic are you in identifying key moments of truth – for example through 'service mapping'?
How do you ensure that each is delivered with excellence and opportunities for failure are minimised?
Do all staff understand and buy in to customer service, including staff who might not usually have direct contact with customers – are they trained and skilled to respond to customers?
Do you know where and when your 'moments of truth' occur?

USE OF IT AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

36
Electronic communication

How are you using electronic communication opportunities?
The rapid growth of the web and use of electronic data give many opportunities to interact with customers and suppliers, and to create new services. Are you using electronic communication to promote distance learning or aid study?
Having a website scores only 2. To move beyond this you would need to provide the opportunity for customers to interact with you, to deal with you or have part of your service available online.

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33
Customer relations
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
Relationships with customers limited and often dissolve. Little attention is paid to using relationships in service provision		We are beginning to invest in relationships and to use them to create loyal customers. There is limited development of individual customer solutions		Our processes are designed to use relationships with our customers to customise/provide solutions that create value and mutual benefit. We are easy to do business with

34
Current use of IT
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
IT only used for standard applications (eg accounts, invoicing, payroll)		Investment in IT to improve functional performance within departments, with little change in processes		IT and other technologies used to support redesign of processes to radically improve the way that services are delivered

35
Managing 'moments of truth'
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
Processes for delivering customer service not identified, nor well understood		Service processes understood and key customer contact points ('moments of truth') identified/mapped		We ensure that every customer contact is delivered with excellence, and potential problems are anticipated and prevented

USE OF IT AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

36
Electronic communication
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
No method of electronic communication currently being used		Use of IT goes beyond simple website. Customers can search for information and there is some interactivity (eg e-mail enquiries). A small percentage of electronic customer communication		Extensive use of electronic communication allows customers to deal with organisation online (eg e-mail assignments or staff, course resources, distance learning). Many customers interact with us electronically

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37
IT integration

How integrated is the use of IT?
Is data available throughout the organisation to those that need it?
Are there effective online processes?
Do all the IT systems link up as needed?
Are the IT systems compatible?

38
IT as basis for knowledge management

How are you using IT to facilitate knowledge building and sharing throughout the organisation?
Do you capture extensive data on customers?
How effectively do you use this through means such as data mining to develop and deliver better services for them?

WORKING WITH SUPPLIERS

39
Supplier relationship and stability

How do you select suppliers?
Do you have an approved supplier list?
What kind of relationship do you have with them?
These can range from long-term partnerships to short-term year-to-year negotiations and bidding. How do these help your suppliers and partners meet your requirements?

40
Influencing suppliers of workforce (schools, learning providers, etc.)

One of the major inputs to many service companies is its workforce – learning providers are no different. What role do you take in influencing what you want from the suppliers of your own workforce, teaching and non-teaching (eg schools, organisations and similar organisations)?

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37
IT integration
Please mark score in right-hand box

There are many disconnected systems in the organisation. Many functions are not touched by IT

Many parts of the organisation are integrated and connected, but there are some elements not online with the majority

The entire organisation works in a common IT environment with real-time online processes and easy cross-organisation access

38
IT as basis for knowledge management
Please mark score in right-hand box

IT used primarily to substitute for labour (eg accounting, voicemail)

IT used for improved communication (eg e-mail), and the archiving of processes, projects and information (eg project files)

IT used to foster new ideas, facilitate cross-functional efforts (eg groupware), and provide a real-time knowledge-base for internal and external learning (eg continually updated customer database)

WORKING WITH SUPPLIERS

39
Supplier relationship and stability
Please mark score in right-hand box

Relationships with suppliers are typically short-term, year-to-year negotiations with bidding. Suppliers are changed frequently

There are some suppliers viewed as long-term partners

There are long-term relationships in place with most suppliers

40
Influencing suppliers of workforce (schools, learning providers, etc)
Please mark score in right-hand box

Organisation takes a passive role

Organisation has some interaction with workforce suppliers

Organisation takes a proactive role in seeking to influence suppliers of workforce

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41
Outsourcing

Factors such as globalisation of IT are leading to many more service jobs being performed on a contract basis. This can help to develop an organisation that is responsive and flexible but can also hollow out the organisation, running the risk of losing culture and distinctiveness. How much outsourcing do you do?
How well thought through are the costs and benefits?
If you chose to pursue outsourcing or not pursue it, why did you make this decision?

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41

Outsourcing

Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
Our outsourcing is 'hollowing' the organisation, losing culture and distinctiveness		The organisation's outsourcing has a neutral effect		Outsourcing has been carefully considered and used only where it can reduce cost and add value to customers and the organisation without risking the core service

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SERVICE EFFECTIVENESS

42
Innovations

How many new services and innovative ways in which services and courses are delivered have been developed in the past 3 years?
How does this compare with sector norms?
What percentage of your service provision comes from these innovative services?

43
Clarity of service concept

One of the strengths of world-class organisations is the clarity of their service concept and how they share this with their customers and staff. Do you have a clear vision of your service concept and the benefits that it is delivering to customers? How is this transmitted so that it is clear and shared by both staff and customers (and – where appropriate – suppliers)?

44
Speed of development relative to the sector

New ideas are easy to copy so speed of response can be crucial.
If you have a new idea, how long does it take you to put it into practice?
Do you have a process ready to action new ideas?
How fast are you relative to others in the sector in getting new ideas out and responding to innovations from others?

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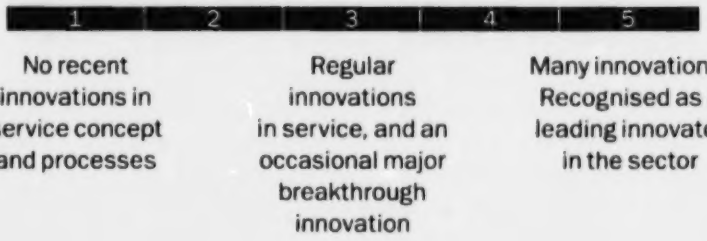
SERVICE EFFECTIVENESS

42
Innovations
Please mark score in right-hand box


1
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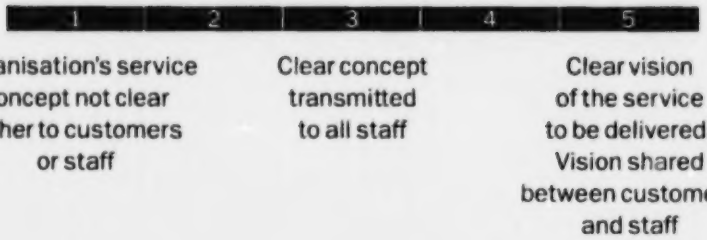
5
No recent innovations in service concept and processes
Regular innovations in service, and an occasional major breakthrough innovation
Many innovations. Recognised as a leading innovator in the sector

43
Clarity of service concept
Please mark score in right-hand box


1
2
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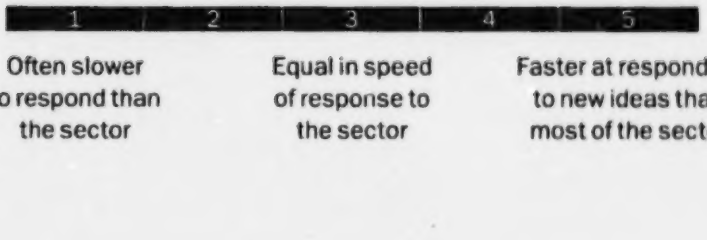
5
Organisation's service concept not clear either to customers or staff
Clear concept transmitted to all staff
Clear vision of the service to be delivered. Vision shared between customers and staff

44
Speed of development relative to the sector
Please mark score in right-hand box



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45
Service meeting customer needs

No matter how good and motivated the staff, if a service is not adequately resourced and designed to meet customer needs it may not produce results that create satisfied customers. What do your customers tell you about the design of your service relative to their needs?
Is this continually improved in line with increasing customer expectations?
How do you know?

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46
Distinctiveness of service

Creating a service that is not another 'me too' service can separate your organisation from the next. How distinctive is your service, and is this easy to maintain?
What distinguishes your service from other learning providers?

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45
Service meeting customer needs
Please mark score in right-hand box

Service does not consistently meet customer needs

Service generally meets customer needs

Service produces results that consistently meet and exceed customer needs

46
Distinctiveness of service
Please mark score in right-hand box

'Me too' service. Little differentiation

Service is perceived as somewhat differentiated from other learning providers

Service concept and its alignment with customer needs provide distinctive services that are hard for other providers to imitate

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MANAGING FOR IMPROVEMENT

47
Management of customer loyalty and learner retention

How well do you understand why learners leave and why they stay?
What research do you undertake to find out?
What programmes and actions do you have in place for increasing learner retention?
How do you address the loyalty of other external customers?

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48
Management involvement in quality leadership

Creating and sustaining a quality vision in an organisation requires leadership from the top. How committed and supportive of the quality goals of the organisation are the governors and SMT?
Do they lead by example?
Is quality seen to be central to management thinking?

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49
Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement – 'kaizen' – is a core theme of quality management.
How is continuous improvement organised?
What training is there for staff teams?
What tools are used (eg brainstorming, cause and effect diagrams, flowcharts)?
Are all services reviewed and improved as a matter of course or do improvements and review happen as a result of complaints or other customer feedback?

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MANAGING FOR IMPROVEMENT

47
Management of customer loyalty and learner retention
Please mark score in right-hand box

No explicit management emphasis on learner retention or customer loyalty

Learner retention data collected. Some research on why learners leave

Systematic effort to enhance loyalty and retention, including identification of the links between satisfaction and retention. Value of retention and loyalty calculated

48
Management involvement in quality leadership
Please mark score in right-hand box

Managers are generally uninterested in quality issues

Senior managers and governors supportive of quality programmes. Some delegation of quality leadership

Senior managers and governors exert personal leadership of organisation's overall quality programme

49
Continuous improvement
Please mark score in right-hand box

No systematic programme of continuous improvement or use of quality tools

Forced to make improvements by stakeholders and customers. Limited use of quality tools

Committed to continuous improvement. Emphasis on understanding quality problems before taking action. All staff use quality tools

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50
Collection and use of data on quality ('management by fact')

What examples can you give of data you actively collect from learners and service providers?
How do you use this information for strategic planning and service improvement?

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51
Problem solving

How are problems treated?
Is there a team approach to identifying causes and developing solutions, as opposed to escalation to management?
Are staff or individuals penalised when problems arise, or is there a belief that procedures are at fault and may need revision to become 'fail-safe'?
What training is given to staff to enable them to solve problems?
Is there a desire to learn from problems or just the application of a quick fix?

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52
Quality mindset

What steps have been taken to move from a 'checking' mindset to a view that quality is everybody's responsibility?
What training is planned to equip staff with required tools and skills?
Do all staff take ownership of their processes?
Does the organisation strive for excellence?

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53
Quality procedures and framework

To what degree do you have well-documented procedures in your organisation? For example, having ISO 9000 service accreditation or an equivalent would lead to a score of 3. How is adherence to procedures maintained?
How are staff encouraged to review existing operation procedures and improve them?
Does the organisation use any non-prescribed self-assessment frameworks such as the EFQM/BQF Excellence Model to drive process improvement?

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50
Collection and use of data on quality ('management by fact')
Please mark score in right-hand box

Fragmentary data collection of quality measures. Only prescribed data collected

Quality data on some non-prescribed results collected. Restricted use for understanding quality-related problems in the organisation

Actively collects data from a variety of sources on customer feedback, quality improvement and other service providers as a basis of improvement and strategic planning

51
Problem solving
Please mark score in right-hand box

Crisis mindset, finger pointing

System for identifying and responding to problems, using process analysis and teams

Problems viewed as opportunities for further improvement, and all staff empowered to act

52
Quality mindset
Please mark score in right-hand box

'Problems will happen.' Deal with customer complaints

Inspection and control, with some data collection and analysis

Total quality mindset. Quality is everyone's job, and staff take ownership of processes

53
Quality procedures and framework
Please mark score in right-hand box

No procedures for quality management in place

Quality management procedures are documented, but limited in scope

Comprehensive framework followed for quality management (eg EFQM/BQF Excellence Model)

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54
Service guarantees

Do you guarantee the quality of service and courses or customer satisfaction?
Do you give compensation?
Is this seen as meaningful by customers?
Is it easy for customers to complain or to make claims for compensation?

SERVICE RECOVERY

55
'Real-time' staff handling of service problems/failures

How are service problems and failures dealt with?
To what degree are staff explicitly and appropriately empowered to deal with these, and to take immediate decisions to resolve problems without recourse to supervisors?
What training and support are they given to do this?
For example, some companies allow frontline staff to give compensation up to set limits in addition to refunds without referring to their manager.

56
Problem handling strategy for service recovery

Service recovery is more than correcting mistakes. Effective customer problem handling can turn a negative experience into a positive one.
If problems occur frequently, have they been identified?
Have both preventive action and explicit policies been developed to deal with these?
Are there procedures in place to ensure that all customer problems are dealt with rapidly, and with minimum hand-ons (transfers)?
How do you ensure that your problem handling policies are effective?

57
Use of customer complaint data

How are complaints captured?
Is it easy for a customer to contact your organisation with a complaint or problem?
Do you make it clear how and to whom complaints can be addressed?
What do you do with complaint data?
If the number of complaints received is used as a performance measure for managers, you can score no more than 3 on this question. To score a 5, you must see complaints as valuable feedback, to be actively solicited and used for service improvement.

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54
Service guarantees
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
No guarantee		Limited guarantees given, but compensation small relative to real cost to customer (eg course refund fee)		Service guarantee seen as giving real compensation. Easy for customers to understand and claim

SERVICE RECOVERY

55
'Real-time' staff handling of service problems/failures
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
Service problems/ failures not identified or responded to		Sporadic resolution to service problems and failures in delivery		Staff empowered to deal with failures/ problems in real time and make immediate decisions

56
Problem handling strategy for service recovery
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
No explicit strategy for handling problems – service recovery		Staff use defined procedures for dealing with routine problems quickly. Non-routine problems take a lot longer		Explicit strategy for action consistently yields fast and personal service recovery

57
Use of customer complaint data
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
No procedures for capturing or using customer complaint information		Customer complaint data is captured and used as a measure of service performance		Customer feedback and complaints actively solicited and used for service improvement

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58
Complaint handling procedure

What does the customer experience when making a complaint?
Is it easy to contact the right person?
Do customers typically just speak to one person, or are they passed on to others in the organisation?
How rapid is the initial response?
How quickly are complaints resolved?
Is the first person to encounter a customer problem, regardless of position, responsible for seeing it resolved?

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FLEXIBILITY/RESPONSIVENESS

59
Staff discretion

In terms of giving staff the discretion to act within a wide range of, where are you on the pendulum of tight control, limited procedures or complete freedom to act?
Are staff in self-managed teams?
What policies and training do you have to support this?

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60
Workforce flexibility

If the organisation demands it, are your staff willing and able to take on a wide range of assignments?
What percentage of your staff are sufficiently multiskilled to enable them to do this?
Does the organisation have policies in place to encourage multiskilling?
Will managers help out with frontline work when there is extreme short-term pressure?
What work assignment and team working arrangements do you have to take advantage of this?

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58
Complaint handling procedures
Please mark score in right-hand box

No clear department or person for customer queries and complaints. People tend to pass the buck – often without satisfactory resolution

A customer with a complaint usually needs to speak to two or three people to resolve the problem

A customer with a problem or compliant will normally deal with a single person, who takes ownership of the problem through to resolution

FLEXIBILITY/RESPONSIVENESS

59
Staff discretion
Please mark score in right-hand box

Staff are actively discouraged from challenging procedures

Staff have limited discretion within tightly defined limits

Staff have broad discretion (empowerment) to take any action they deem necessary

60
Workforce flexibility
Please mark score in right-hand box

One person, one job

Flexible assignment of workers with wide variation in skills and abilities

Flexible assignment of trained staff with flexible skills, working in autonomous teams, empowered to solve problems

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SERVICE QUALITY

61
Reliability

Of all aspects of service quality, reliability in the delivery of service is seen as fundamental. Without reliable service, customers will not respond to other aspects of service quality. What is reliability to your customers (learners, employers and others)?
How reliable is the service?
How well do you deliver what is promised?

62
Quality performance, relative to sector

What is your position in terms of quality in the markets that you serve?
How do your targets and achievements relate to the sector performance?
What data do you have to support this view?

63
Staff responsiveness

Responsiveness is both the speed with which staff respond to customer needs and the degree to which they listen to customers and try to respond to the individual needs of customers even when not part of the core service.
Do your customers see your staff as responsive?

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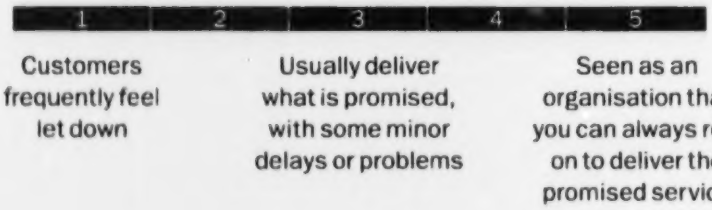
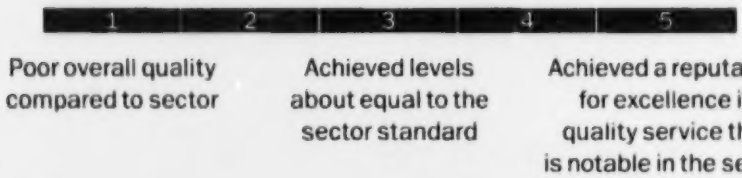
SERVICE QUALITY

61
Reliability
Please mark score in right-hand box


1
2
3
4
5
Customers frequently feel let down
Usually deliver what is promised, with some minor delays or problems
Seen as an organisation that you can always rely on to deliver the promised service

62
Quality performance, relative to sector
Please mark score in right-hand box


1
2
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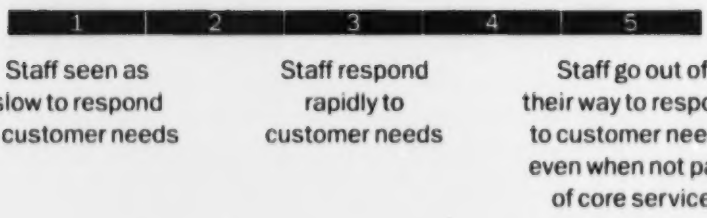
5
Poor overall quality compared to sector
Achieved levels about equal to the sector standard
Achieved a reputation for excellence in quality service that is notable in the sector

63
Staff responsiveness
Please mark score in right-hand box


1
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5
Staff seen as slow to respond to customer needs
Staff respond rapidly to customer needs
Staff go out of their way to respond to customer needs even when not part of core service

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64
Courtesy

How does your organisation ensure that all staff are courteous?
What are the relevant selection, training and measurement policies?
Are staff courteous, even under pressure?
Does this extend to non-customer-facing staff as diverse as accountants, cleaners and administrators who might come into contact with customers even if just on the phone?

65
Accessibility

Companies in the US recently rated accessibility as the number one service criterion. Accessibility covers a wide range of issues – it includes being open when customers want to use the service, the ability to contact the right person whenever needed, ease of access such as not having to wait for phones to be answered and physical accessibility such as ease of parking, wheelchair access, closeness to public transport, etc. What are the key aspects of accessibility to your customers? How well are these met?

66
Impact on society

Increasingly organisations are seeing their social responsibilities as lying outside their immediate environment and extending to society as a whole. Learning providers by the nature of their business have considerable impact on society, including providing services in outreach centres. In addition to this learning provision, what else is your organisation doing to attend to social and environmental issues in the communities in which you operate, for example neighbours to the organisation or local support groups, and to support your staff in this area? Do you promote energy efficiency and recycling?

67
Service tangibles

Most services have tangibles such as physical facilities, resource centres, handouts and other course materials. What does your organisation do to ensure that these are of a high quality and meet the needs of the learners? What image does the organisation project to its customers?

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64
Courtesy
Please mark score in right-hand box

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

High variability among staff

Teaching and service delivery staff are generally courteous, but room for improvement – support staff do not generally consider themselves responsible to external customers

All staff who have any contact with customers are seen as courteous

65
Accessibility
Please mark score in right-hand box

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

Availability and hours of operation to suit staff and organisation. Often long waits on telephone, physical access/ parking difficulty

Easy to get through on phone. Staff available during normal working hours, but only limited availability outside that time. Physical access acceptable

Customers can get through to relevant person without long waits on the phone. Excellent physical access/parking. Accessibility for customers/opening hours – meet their needs without time or other constraint

66
Impact on society
Please mark score in right-hand box

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

Attention to social and environmental issues restricted to compliance (regulatory)

Attention to social and environmental issues extends beyond compliance obligations

Systematically addresses activities such as energy conservation, support for local communities, recycling, etc

67
Service tangibles
Please mark score in right-hand box

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

Tangibles below average for the sector

Tangibles on par with sector

Superior tangibles, equal to best in sector

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COST AND VALUE

68
Focus on staff efficiency

Staff efficiency at all levels – including managerial – is one of the major drivers of cost in most service organisations. What programmes and actions are in place to improve staff efficiency?

69
Elimination of 'waste'

Activities that do not add value to the customer can be considered as 'waste'.
How are wasteful activities identified?
Do you map/flowchart your process to identify duplication of effort and waste?
What steps are being taken to eliminate waste or non-value added activities?

70
Value for money (superior quality and lower cost)

Successful service organisations deliver value to their customers through having better designed services than other service providers, delivered with higher quality and lower cost. To score above a 3 on this question, you must have moved beyond a single focus, of just high quality or low cost, to be genuinely seeking to exploit the potential for delivering superior quality at lower cost.

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COST AND VALUE

68
Focus on staff efficiency
Please mark score in right-hand box

Little attention paid to staff efficiency

Major elements of staff costs and job elements identified

Efficiency is a major focus of managerial attention

69
Elimination of 'waste'
Please mark score in right-hand box

The activities of the organisation have not been questioned for some time

Non-value-adding activities becoming a focus of managerial attention

Systems are in place to tackle all activities that do not add value to the customer

70
Value for money (superior quality and lower cost)
Please mark score in right-hand box

Value for money not addressed

Value created by making trade-offs (eg focus on low cost or high quality)

Exceptional value created through combination of quality, service design and cost management

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SERVICE STANDARDS

71
Established service standards

Too often, service standards have a historical and internal basis rather than on the needs of the customer.
What service standards does your organisation have in place?
For example, telephone response time, assignment marking, etc.
On what basis were they developed?
Do they reflect the needs of customers?
How often are they reviewed?

72
Visibility and communication of service standards

How does your organisation ensure that the key performance standards and outcomes are visible to all staff and customers?

73
Challenging standards

Challenging goals can lead to superior performance, while easy-to-achieve standards can rarely motivate an organisation to improve.
How realistic and challenging are the standards that you set yourself?
Are they related to those of best-in-class learning providers?
Are these standards updated as performance improves and customer expectations increase?
Are your standards based on national, learning provider type or local levels of performance?

74
Clarity of goals

How well are the goals of the organisation communicated and understood?
Do they guide all in the organisation to meet its objectives?

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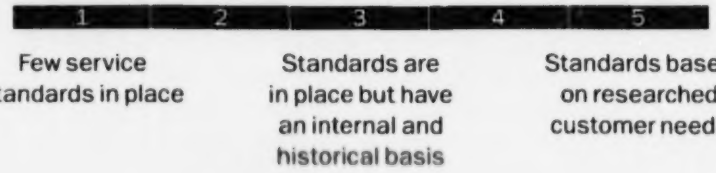
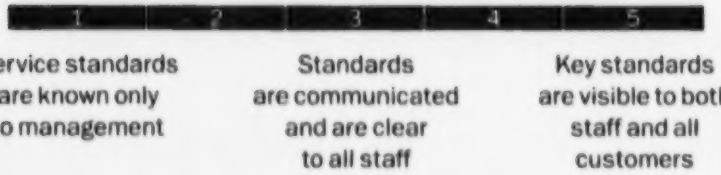
SERVICE STANDARDS

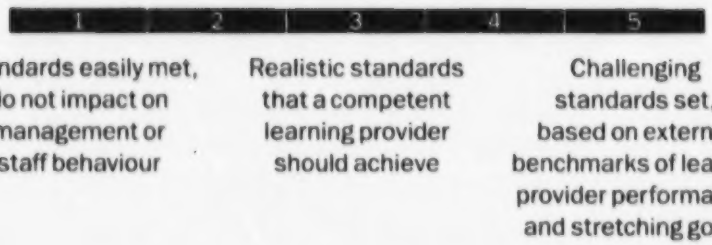
71
Established service standards
Please mark score in right-hand box



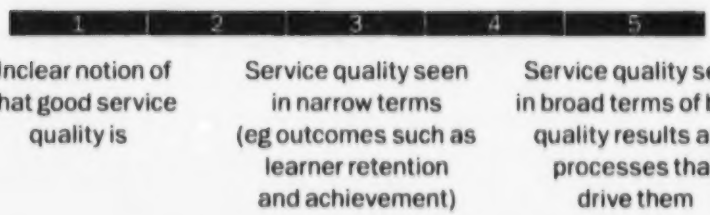
72
Visibility and communication of service standards
Please mark score in right-hand box



73
Challenging standards
Please mark score in right-hand box


1
2
3
4
5
Standards easily met, do not impact on management or staff behaviour
Realistic standards that a competent learning provider should achieve
Challenging standards set, based on external benchmarks of learner provider performance and stretching goals

74
Clarity of goals
Please mark score in right-hand box


1
2
3
4
5
Unclear notion of what good service quality is
Service quality seen in narrow terms (eg outcomes such as learner retention and achievement)
Service quality seen in broad terms of both quality results and processes that drive them

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75
Management attention to quality measures

Performance measurement systems that are not used by management to improve the organisation in both the short and long term can soon lose effectiveness.
What performance measures are regularly used by managers?
How does the organisation review and use performance data to assess progress relative to plans and to identify key areas for improvement?

76
Process benchmarking

Process benchmarking goes beyond league tables. It involves mapping your processes and using that information to identify best practice in other organisations, adapting it for your organisation and adopting it. To score highly, the organisation will need to demonstrate effective use of process benchmarking – the search for and implementation of best practice – from any sector. If this activity exists, how is it formally incorporated into improvement systems and what has it achieved?

77
Performance measurement and reporting

Increasingly, organisations use more than financial figures and statutory indicators for performance reporting. How broad is the set of measures that the organisation uses? Are approaches such as the balanced scorecard, EFQM/BQF Excellence Model or The Inclusive Company used to measure performance?

78
Customer satisfaction measurement

What measurements are in place to track customer satisfaction?
Does the organisation simply react to customer complaints or does it seek to understand customer requirements in more detail by using surveys, focus groups, etc?
When problems are identified is there a formal ownership and resolution process?
How are the causes of dissatisfaction identified and what processes are in place to prevent reoccurrence?

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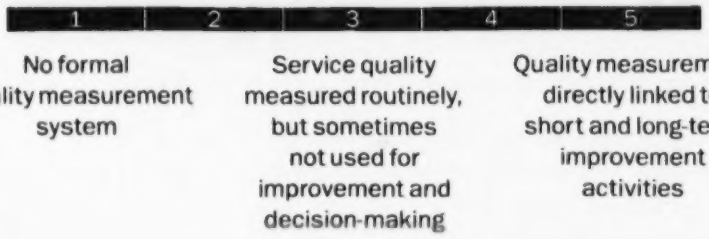
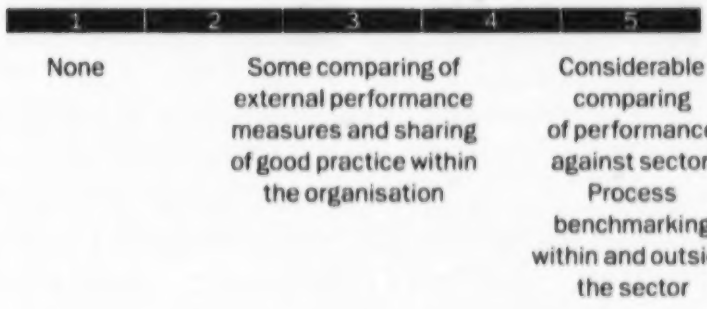
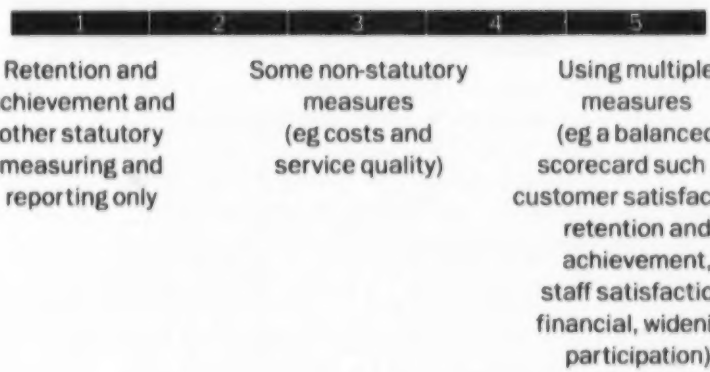
75
Management attention to quality measures
Please mark score in right-hand box


1
2
3
4
5
No formal quality measurement system
Service quality measured routinely, but sometimes not used for improvement and decision-making
Quality measurement directly linked to short and long-term improvement activities

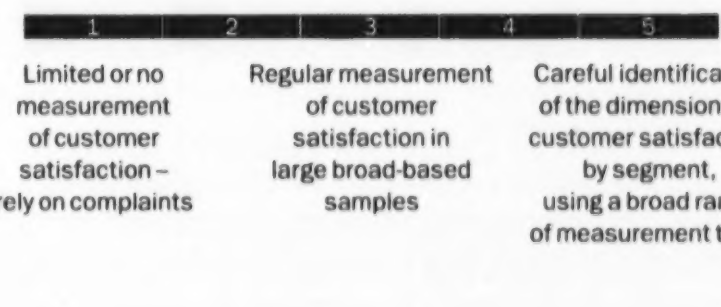
76
Process benchmarking
Please mark score in right-hand box


1
2
3
4
5
None
Some comparing of external performance measures and sharing of good practice within the organisation
Considerable comparing of performance against sector. Process benchmarking within and outside the sector

77
Performance measurement and reporting
Please mark score in right-hand box


1
2
3
4
5
Retention and achievement and other statutory measuring and reporting only
Some non-statutory measures (eg costs and service quality)
Using multiple measures (eg a balanced scorecard such as customer satisfaction, retention and achievement, staff satisfaction, financial, widening participation)

78
Customer satisfaction measurement
Please mark score in right-hand box


1
2
3
4
5
Limited or no measurement of customer satisfaction – rely on complaints
Regular measurement of customer satisfaction in large broad-based samples
Careful identification of the dimensions of customer satisfaction by segment, using a broad range of measurement tools

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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND VALUE

79
Level of customer satisfaction

What is considered to be a good level of customer satisfaction and how is it defined?
A delighted customer is one who will remain loyal to the organisation and willingly recommend you to others. What proportion of your customers fit this definition?
How often does the organisation exceed customer expectations?

80
Trends in customer satisfaction

Customer expectations continually increase. Has your organisation kept pace with this?
What are the trends in customer satisfaction in your organisation relative to the sector?
If the organisation does not know how it performs relative to the sector then a score of 3 is all that can be justified.

81
Value (quality/price)

How do all your customers (funding bodies, employers and learners) perceive your service in terms of value for money?
What data do you have to support this?
How do they relate to the rest of the sector?

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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND VALUE

79
Level of customer satisfaction
Please mark score in right-hand box

Customer expectation often not met. Some customer complaints

Little customer dissatisfaction. Expectations met, but rarely exceeded

Many delighted customers. Customers will enthusiastically recommend the organisation to others. Expectations are often exceeded

80
Trends in customer satisfaction
Please mark score in right-hand box

Customer satisfaction has decreased over the last 3 years

Customer satisfaction has been sustained

Substantial, measured improvement in customer satisfaction over the past 3 years

81
Value (quality/price)
Please mark score in right-hand box

Customer perception of value is lower than the sector

Value for money is on par with the sector

The organisation is perceived as offering high value

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CUSTOMER LOYALTY

82
Customer retention

How loyal are your customers?
Do they choose to return to you, or do they switch to other learning providers frequently? In many industries this is known as the 'churn' rate. What data do you have on churn? Is this high or low relative to other organisations?
If you have a monopoly, how loyal would your customers be if they had a choice of service providers?

83
Customer base

In most industries all organisations experience customer defection.
Are the net defections to your organisation positive or negative?
If your customers have little or no choice, how would you expect defections to have changed if customers had more choice of suppliers?

BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

84
Margins relative to sector

Does the organisation operate at a deficit, breakeven or surplus?
Does the organisation successfully earn revenue from non-funded services provision?
How do you compare with the sector on these issues?
If you do not know how the sector performs then a score of 3 is probably all that can be justified.

85
Market share

Is market share used as an active measure of business performance?
Has any independent confirmation been sought of market position over time and likely trends, new competitors or changes in customer profiles?
What is the current trend in market share?

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CUSTOMER LOYALTY

82
Customer retention
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	3	5
High rate of customer turnover (eg learner drop out and loss of local partnerships or employers)	Stable customer base (average learner retention and stable local partnerships or employers)	Customers are exceptionally loyal (very high retention for learners and other customers)

83
Customer base
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	3	5
The overall customer base is declining faster than other organisations	There is a steady customer base	The customer base is expanding, with many customers coming to the organisation from other service providers

BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

84
Margins relative to sector
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	3	5
Below sector average	At sector average	Above sector average

85
Market share
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	3	5
Declining	Static	Increasing

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86
Cashflow

Use today's position, but assess the general direction of cashflow over the last few months to determine whether it is moderately or strongly flowing in any one particular direction.

87
Overall productivity within organisation

Use a year-on-year assessment of productivity gains. How is productivity measured – output per head? What examples are there of productivity improvements to date? How is progress going to be maintained in the future?

88
Return on net assets

Net before tax (NBT) divided by assets minus liabilities. If the business does not know how the sector performs then a score of 3 is probably all that can be justified.

89
Operating costs

What steps are taken to establish competitive position?
How sensitive to price variation is the market?

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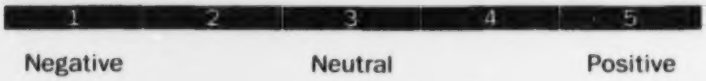
86
Cashflow
Please mark score in right-hand box



Negative | Neutral | Positive

87
Overall productivity within organisation
Please mark score in right-hand box

Decreasing | Moderate improvement | Consistently improving. Significant gains

88
Return on net assets
Please mark score in right-hand box

Lower than sector | Equal to sector | Better than sector

89
Operating costs
Please mark score in right-hand box

Greater than sector | Equal to sector | Lowest in sector

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90
Overall productivity, relative to sector

This question is similar to the one on organisation productivity growth, but here we are asking you to compare yourself against the productivity growth in the sector.

91
Prices

For equivalent services do you seek to charge a premium price or does your organisation seek to undercut the prices of other service providers?

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90
Overall productivity, relative to sector
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
Limited productivity gains over last 3 years		Steady productivity gains. Productivity levels equal to sector		High level of productivity improvement sustained over last 3 years. Productivity among sector leaders

91
Prices
Please mark score in right-hand box

1	2	3	4	5
Lower than sector		Same as sector		Higher than sector

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GLOSSARY

Back office
The support functions, the part of the organisation that is not in direct contact with the customer.

Balanced scorecard
Using performance measures that cover both drivers (operational performance, organisational learning and growth) and results (financial performance and customer (market) performance).

Benchmarking
The search for practices that lead to superior performance. Comparing your processes and performance against those of other organisations.

Business process
A set of activities, often involving different functions, that produces an end result.

Churn rate
The percentage of the customers who no longer use your service after a given period (usually one year).

Data mining
Processes for systematically searching large databases, typically of customers, for patterns and insights.

EFQM/BQF Business Excellence Model
Originally the European Foundation of Quality Management award model, now developed into a model for business excellence.

Electronic commerce
The use of the Internet or electronic data interchange to support business; both business to business and business to customer.

GroupWare
Software that supports data sharing between a wide range (groups) of people.

Innovation
The successful exploitation of new ideas.

ISO 9000
A series of standards addressing quality procedures and management.

Moments of truth
Any interaction between an organisation and the customer, not just face-to-face but telephone, written, etc.

Non-statutory performance measures
Measures of performance that the organisation does not have to make to satisfy either legal requirements or funding requirements. Examples are staff satisfaction or room use.

Outsourcing
Using outside organisations to provide services, such as cleaning or catering, on behalf of the organisation.

Quality function development
A technique for matching the design of products and services to customer requirements.

Real time
At the same time, without delay.

Sector positioning
How the organisation positions itself when providing services for customers compared to other learning providers. For example, does it concentrate on particular course levels, subjects or age groups?

Service culture
A culture where the importance of service to all customers, internal and external, is embedded in everyone's behaviour.

Service guarantee
A promise of recompense if a certain standard of service has not been delivered.

Service mapping
A technique for mapping the interactions between customers and the organisation over the whole service process.

Service processes
Business processes that deliver customer service.

Service recovery
The process of handling customer problems and turning them from a negative into a positive.

Value
The ratio of service level to price. High service and low price = high value.

Virtual organisation
An organisation that is geographically dispersed, with many functions outsourced, often coordinated electronically.

World class
Having practices and the resulting performance matching the best in the world.

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